The original documents are located in Box 28, “4/3/76 - Gridiron Dinner” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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GRIDIRON DINNER

SATURDAY - APRIL 3, 1976
AS WE GATHER HERE TONIGHT IN COMPANY THAT IS
FAMILIAR AND CLOTHES THAT ARE NOT -- IT REALLY
FEELS GOOD TO BE IN THE GLOW OF THE GRIDIRON AGAIN.

AS ALWAYS IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL SHOW --
SPARKLING LYRICS, MEMORABLE MUSIC, A GREAT CAST ---
AND OF COURSE, THAT SENSATIONAL SOFT-SHOE DANCE NUMBER.

WHAT GRACE, WHAT DELICACY, WHAT CHARM AND
BETTY WASN'T BAD EITHER.
YOU KNOW, WHEN WE WENT TO CHINA -- AT PARTIES -- AT STATE DINNERS -- EVERYBODY IS ALWAYS COMPLIMENTING BETTY'S DANCING. I DON'T WANT TO SOUND JEALOUS, BUT I CAN DANCE BETTER THAN HER ANYTIME. I JUST DON'T LOOK GOOD IN TIGHTS.
THIS HAS REALLY BEEN A VERY EXCITING WEEK.

TUESDAY NIGHT BETTY AND I WATCHED THE ACADEMY AWARDS

AND DID YOU NOTICE HOW MUCH THE TITLES OF THOSE

MOVIES HAD IN COMMON WITH THE PRIMARIES?

DOG DAY AFTERNOON  ----  JAWS  ----  TAKE THE MONEY AND

RUN  ----  ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST  ----  ALTHOUGH

I MUST ADMIT I DIDN'T REALIZE ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S

NEST WAS A REGULAR MOVIE.  I THOUGHT IT WAS A

DOCUMENTARY ABOUT CAPITOL HILL.
WELL, AS JIMMY AND JOHN HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED,

THE PRIMARIES ARE REALLY NARROWING DOWN THE

CANDIDATES. THE DEMOCRATS ARE NOW DOWN TO

28 AND THE REPUBLICANS TO ONE AND A HALF.
GOVERNOR REAGAN DID STOP IN AT THE WHITE HOUSE NOT TOO LONG AGO. HE WANTED TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND. HE SAID HE Couldn'T STAY LONG. I SAID, "YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT." WE WENT TO THE BATHROOM TO WASH UP AND I TOLD HIM TO BE SURE HE USED THE GUEST TOWELS.
LET ME CONGRATULATE GOVERNOR JIMMY CARTER ON HIS FINE SPEECH. THAT'S THE GOVERNOR OVER THERE.

IT'S EASY TO SEE WHERE HE SITS. NOW IF WE COULD

ONLY FIGURE OUT WHERE HE STANDS.
INCIDENTALLY, TO DISPELL ANY DOUBTS ABOUT

THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS POSITION, GOVERNOR CARTER IS

NOW BEGINNING A MASSIVE DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, GOVERNOR CARTER HAS PUT THE SPECIFIC, CONCRETE DETAILS OF ALL OF HIS PROGRAMS TO DEAL WITH FOREIGN POLICY, DEFENSE, INTERNATIONAL TRADE, THE ENVIRONMENT, THE ECONOMY, UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, CRIME, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET --- INTO ONE ALL-ENCOMPASSING DIRECT MAIL PIECE.

(YOU HOLD UP POSTCARD) LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THIS HAS TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST POSTCARDS YOU'VE EVER READ.
I KEEP HEARING AND READING ABOUT HOW JIMMY CARTER IS A PEANUT FARMER. NOW THE SYMBOL OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS AN ELEPHANT. JIMMY, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS --- BUT ELEPHANTS EAT PEANUTS!
JIMMY CARTER HAS A LOT GOING FOR HIM BUT I HAPPEN TO KNOW THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF IS HOPING AGAINST HOPE I'LL BE REELECTED. IT'S MUCH EASIER CLEANING PIPE ASHES THAN PEANUT SHELLS. (one iteration)
(PHONE RINGS)

EXCUSE ME. I THINK THIS COULD BE IMPORTANT.

(PICK UP RECEIVER)

HELLO -------------- HUBERT!

UH - HUH -------- UH - HUH -------- UH - HUH --------

(PICK UP PIPE - LOAD PIPE)

UH - HUH.

(LIGHT PIPE - PICK UP RECEIVER)

UH - HUH -------- UH - HUH --------

GOODBYE, HUBERT ---------- GOODBYE, HUBERT ------

GOODBYE, HUBERT.

(HOLD RECEIVER TO MIKE -- HANG UP)

THAT WAS HUBERT. HE JUST WANTED TO SAY HELLO.
THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT EVENING.

YOU KNOW, THE GRIDIRON DINNER IS ONE OF SO MANY FINE OLD WASHINGTON TRADITIONS THAT MAKE LIVING, WORKING, AND SERVING HERE, A VERY FULFILLING EXPERIENCE.
THE ESSENCE OF THE GRIDIRON IS SUMMED UP IN ITS

BELIEF THAT WE CAN SINGE BUT NOT BURN. THAT'S A

PRETTY GOOD IDEA FOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AS WELL.
WE ARE REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS, INDEPENDENTS, CONSERVATIVES, MODERATES, LIBERALS, OR A HOST OF OTHER POLITICAL DESIGNATIONS -- BUT ABOVE ALL, WE ARE AMERICANS. WE COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER IN THE POLITICAL ARENAS SO THAT AMERICA HAS THE CHOICE OF, AND THE BEST THINKING FROM, MANY DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES AND VIEWPOINTS.
AMERICA'S 200 YEARS OF GREATNESS HAVE PROVED

THE WORTH AND THE WISDOM OF THIS DIVERSITY.

HERE UNDER THE WARM GLOW OF THE GRIDIRON, YOU HAVE

DEMONSTRATED THE FUN THAT CAN SPRING FROM THIS DIVERSITY

AS WELL.
FREEDOM AND FUN. WHEN YOU COME
RIGHT DOWN TO IT, ONE REQUIRES THE OTHER. TONIGHT,
I SALUTE THE MEMBERS OF THE GRIDIRON FOR THEIR DEDICATION
TO BOTH AND FOR SHARING THIS WONDERFUL EVENING WITH
US ALL.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT